

Patent claims

1. A method for damage limitation in the event of an offset frontal collision between two motor vehicles, with a first signal which signals an imminent collision triggering the steerable front wheels (9, 10) to turn inward in opposite directions, characterized in that the steerable wheels are moved back to the initial position again after the collision or if the collision has not taken place after all.
2. The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the first signal is generated by the direction and distance data which is repetitively recorded by at least one sensor (20; 20', 20'') being evaluated on the basis of criteria, and the first signal being transmitted when the result of the evaluation determines a collision probability which is above a predefined value.
3. The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the collision which actually occurs is determined by a further sensor (22) which transmits a second signal in response to which the steerable wheel (9) on the collision side is moved back to its initial position and the other wheel (10) remains turned.
4. The method as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that the wheel (10) which is not on the collision side is moved back to the initial position only when the yaw rate of the vehicle is virtually zero.

5. The method as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that both wheels (9, 10) are moved back to their initial position again if the second signal is not transmitted within a specific period of time.

6. The method as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that the first signal triggers the wheels to turn at a time which depends on the speed at which the two vehicles approach one another.

7. A motor vehicle having an apparatus for damage limitation in the event of an offset frontal collision, with the motor vehicle having a steering apparatus (13, 14, 15, 16) which is associated with the front wheels (9, 10), characterized in that at least one reversible actuator (17; 17', 17'') with an external power source is provided in the steering apparatus (13, 14, 15, 16) and influences the turning of the steerable wheels (9, 10) via connecting elements, with the at least one actuator causing the two wheels to turn in opposite directions on the instructions of a signal.

8. The motor vehicle as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that two actuators (17', 17'') with an external power source are provided, with each actuator being associated with a steerable wheel (9, 10).

9. The motor vehicle as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that the actuator (17; 17', 17'') is an electric motor.